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Record World

Baroquery in the croakery

By JACOB SISKIND
of The Gazette

RCA, which seems to have abdicated its once preeminent position in the world of recorded music, has come up with a new album that is presumably designed to appeal to those who do not care for classical music. It is entitled Adagio and has a pale green cover that suggests an insipid parody of Elvira Madigan, except this ain't no parody. It's the real thing.

Inside the fancy jacket there is, take a deep breath, hand-writ poetry.

"When loving you makes everything so beautiful,
it hurts
to listen or
to feel
or just
to be alive."

It goes on for about 30 more sentimental lines.

The album, then, is for lovers, or wood-be lovers.

The music? It's by Albinoni, Cimarosa, Handel, Vivaldi, Pachelbel and Marcello — the Adagios from a number of works, mostly concerti.

The performers are a first rate group of professionals from New York under the direction of Ettore Stratta, who also produced the album. The soloists are some of the finest free-lancers in the world, and the most expensive. David Nadien, formerly concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic, is there. So are Emanuel Vardi and George Ricci, two of the most highly paid viola and cello players in the business. And so it goes.

And so does the music.

I suspect that the people who run RCA today think that this is where "classical" music is at or where the contemporary audience is at. It is the sort of program that might be conceived by a used-car salesman at a think-tank session.

But the playing and recording are quite acceptable (LSC 3328).

Baroquery seems to be as unfailingly popular as ever. The floodgates opened with the rediscovery of Vivaldi have never been stopped and recordings of music by this master and his contemporaries continue to inundate the market. Much of this is good music, too much of it is simply dull knitting music. But all of it makes perfect background for conversation, for daily routine housework, or to maintain one's level of arousal while trudging through a day at the office.

Some of the latest releases have been superbly recorded, providing a sound so beautiful that you may find yourself listening despite yourself. But that is a risk you take.

VIVALDI

I Musici, who can be very good on records and very bad in person, are very good in a collection of six concerti by Vivaldi for various combinations (Philips 6500-322). There are three concerti for strings, one concerto for violin, organ and strings, another for two violins and strings and yet another for two cellos and strings. These are all really delightful pieces and there are movements scattered throughout the record that force you to listen attentively. Beautifully recorded, too.

If you prefer another approach try the set of four concerti for various instruments recorded by the Dresden State Orchestra under Vittorio Negri (Philips 6500-242) which contains a concerto for violin, with two flutes, oboes, bassoon and strings, another for pairs of violins, oboes, clarinos and bassoon, one for violin and oboe solo, and the last, for pairs of flutes, theorboes, mandolins, salmo, violini in tromba marina. Here there is enough variety in the instrumental colors to make the record interesting on those grounds alone.

HANDEL COLLECTIONS

Three recent Handel records are both fascinating and fun. The first is the Toronto-made recording by the Hart House Orchestra under Boyd Neel of Overtures to Alcina, Berenice and Faramondo, with the Elgar Serenade for Strings and the Holst Fugal Concerto for flute and oboe on the other side. The recordings and the playing are thoroughly respectable, and the recording as such is very good. (DGG 2530-015). But you have only to turn to the Neville Marriner recording of the Alcina Ballet music, with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, which also contains the Overture, to hear the difference between good playing and an imaginative, exciting view of the same music (Argo ZRG 686). The Academy plays as though its life depends on it. The Hart House orchestra is a bunch of pros.

Another Handel record (Philips 6500-369) has the English Chamber Orchestra under Raymond Leppard playing the Royal Fireworks Music and three concerti for various wind instruments in beautifully recorded readings which are more than merely agreeable.

BACH BRANDENBURGS

Having run out of ways to play the six Brandenburg Concerti the record companies have now turned to what they call the "original" version of these six works and have recorded them (Marriner and the Academy) (Philips 6700-045) in superb performances. Unfortunately these are not really "original" versions but rather rough drafts for the works as they are generally known. The most important changes are the use of a horn, played an octave lower, for the impossibly difficult trumpet part in the Second Concerto, which completely changes the character of the work, and the substitution of a much shorter harpsichord cadenza in the first movement of the Fifth Concerto. The latter change shifts the harpsichord's role from one of dominance to one of support. I prefer Bach's second thoughts. I am glad to have the set, but I suspect that I shall play it only occasionally.

Cop on series

HOLLYWOOD — (UPI) — Eddie Egan, the former New York cop whose story was told in The French Connection, will play a guest role in an episode of television's Mannix.

Audrey's back

HOLLYWOOD — (UPI) — Audrey Totter will appear in a recurring role on the Medical Center series, marking her return to MGM studios after 20 years of semi-retirement.

Jesse's new album: A good life in Montreal

By BILL MANN
of The Gazette

It's pouring outside, but inside the little dwelling on Kensington Ave. in NDG it's nice and warm and friendly. Jesse Winchester's house.

It's a comfortable, modest house, nothing out of the ordinary except for all of Jesse's drums and guitars and recording equipment jammed into the tiny basement.

It's just like you might imagine it would be after listening to Jesse's new album, Third Down, 110 To Go, a down-home-up-in-Canada record. Mellow. Peaceful. Friendly. Domestic kind of.

In fact, the only unsettling thing about Jesse's house is the For Sale sign out front.

"I'm afraid the landlord's gonna sell it out from under us," says Winchester in his soft Tennessee drawl as he opens a beer. "He wasn't too happy when I soundproofed this basement. I told him that's where his rent money comes from, my playing."

'Third Down' is Jesse's first album in a year and a half — and only his second in all.

It is quite possibly one of the most pleasant albums to come out this year. Jesse has one of the better voices in music today, an understated tenor with a warm quality to it — like this house.

"It was ready a year ago, but Ampex had three of the tapes on it — the ones produced by Todd Rundgren. And when they had financial problems and sold out, it took a while to get the tapes back."

Jesse, 28, a serious young man, left his native Tennessee in 1967 because of the war and his impending participation in it, however indirectly.

He says, with conviction, that he doesn't miss the U.S. "I'll never leave Canada," he says softly. "It's the first country that's been real to me. I would have liked to have come here on my own, though. It's my only regret."

Jesse is often referred to as a "musicians's musician," and, indeed, his songs have been recorded by luminaries like Joan Baez and the Everly Brothers. The first album met with only moderate commercial success, and Jesse says, even if this one does much better he won't ever leave Canada. He says success won't matter.

Jesse Winchester . . . "James Joyce can go jump in the lake".

Jesse runs upstairs for another beer, and, when he comes back he says, "If it makes me rich, I'll give money the benefit of the doubt." And Jesse Winchester laughs long and loud, the first sign of a crack in an otherwise grim and contemplative mien.

Winchester learned to play flute in May of last year, only six months before he layed down some flute tracks on the new album. One cut in particular, Lullaby for the First Born (a pre-natal lullaby, incidentally — his child Jamie is only nine months old now), has a lovely, lilting flute lead on it.

The whole first side of the record, in fact, produces a very mellow flow that carries through and is somewhat broken by the louder, more electric final cut, Midnight Bus. "The engineering on that one was so different," explains Jesse. "We tried to change it but it didn't work."

Another cut, Glory to The Day, will be perfect, laid-back listening for those snowed-in winter evenings here. It has all the restraint of the other cuts, but with some effective strings on it that were added with the utmost discretion.

"I suppose I sing personal songs," says Winchester, looking down at the floor as he props his boots up on the upright piano.

"But they're songs that share common experiences with other people. I don't really like weirdness. James Joyce can go jump in a lake."

Jesse says he listens almost exclusively to country and western tunes on the radio these days (his most recent album acquisition is a Charley Pride LP).

"I don't like heavy rock and roll at all," he says, wincing. "Except for Jimi Hendrix." Winchester was weaned on Jerry Lee Lewis in C & W heartland Memphis, and he still lists him as his all-time favorite.

He is also often painfully honest about his audiences. When it was noted that he always seemed to draw well in Canada's coffee houses, he replied, "Often it's because I'm the only guy playing in town, not because I'm so popular."

The album will likely at least match the success of the previous one. It deserves better. It's on the Bearsville label, a company owned by Albert Grossman, Bob Dylan's former manager.

There are pictures on the inside covers taken around Jesse's house with liner notes by Juan Rodriguez.

Basically, the album is, as Jesse admits, a statement of his existence in Montreal. He is very comfortable here, and it shows on this exceptional album.

HOT NOTES: Another American talent to move here is the Wackers, a fine California band with a new album, Shredder, just out this week. More on that next week . . . CHOM's Doug Pringle recording? Yes, indeed, confirms Pringle — a solo album (Doug on sitar, of course) . . . French critic Coco Letendre raises a valid question: "You always hear about bands going on 'American tours.' Why not Canadian tours exclusively? There's no reason why not" . . . Deep Purple's Ian Gillan, before his show the other night: "The one thing I dislike the most about North America: The people here are just rude. I know three people here who aren't (Gillan won't say who they are) . . . Some people are working on bringing bluesman extrordinaire John Hammond to Montreal. Wherever or at whatever price, don't miss it . . . The Moody Blues will be coming here in the not-too-distant future . . .

BEST SELLING RECORD LIST

(This weekly survey is compiled by The Gazette through the cooperation of major Montreal retail outlets.)

SINGLES

This Week	Last Week	Wks. on Chart	Name — Artist — Label
1	1	6	Ding a Ling — Chuck Berry (Chess)
2	2	3	Knights in White Satin — Moody Blues (Deram)
3		5	Listen to the Music — Doobie Bros. (Warners)
4	4	2	I'll Be Around — The Spinners (Warners)
5	..	1	Papa Was a Rolling Stone — Temptations (Tamla-Motown)
6	9	3	Use Me — Bill Withers (Sussex)
7		1	Drop Your Guns — April Wine (Aquarius)
8	10	2	I'd Love You to Want Me —Lobo (Big Tree)
9		1	Witchy Woman — Eagles (Asylum)
10		1	I Can See Clearly Now — Johnny Nash (Epic)

ALBUMS

This Week	Last Week	Wks. on Chart	Name — Artist — Label
1	2	6	Catch Bull at Four — Cat Stevens (A&M)
2	1	3	Super Fly (Theme Music) — Curtis Mayfield (Curtom)
3	6	9	Living in the Past — Jethro Tull (Reprise)
4	...	1	All Directions — Temptations (Tamla-Motown)
5	3	6	Maxoom — Mahogany Rush (Kotai)
6	5	5	Volume 4 — Black Sabbath (Warners)
7		1	Days of Future Passed — Moody Blues (Deram)
8	7	2	Purple Passages — Deep Purple (Warners)
9		1	The Lady's Not For Sale — Rita Coolidge (A&M)
10		1	Third Down, 110 to Go — Jesse Winchester (Bearsville)

Anka Attracts

A recent Paul Anka performance at Toronto's Ontario Place drew more than 7,500 people.

Burl Ives

It's nice to be back onstage

By KEN POLE

REGINA — (CP) — The deafening applause surged down from the packed grandstand and broke across the stage in a wave you could almost feel. Burl Ives smiled with a satisfied gleam in his eyes. It was nice to be back.

BURL IVES

The recent appearance was the first time in about 20 years Ives had done a show of this kind. His mellow folk-singing had dropped by the wayside while he tackled Broadway and Hollywood, the stage, films and television — most recently a series called The Bold Ones.

There had been the odd nightclub appearance or TV guest-spot, but the king of American balladeers hadn't turned on a big open-air audience since 1949.

"I've been busy with too many other things," he explained in an interview after settling his six-feet-one-inch and 200-plus-pounds frame in a comfortable chair at his hotel.

"I have a little trouble getting myself organized in any one direction because I have a million ideas a minute. I have a play I want to write but I don't know if I'll ever get started on it.

There's just not that many hours in a day so I guess they'll have to stay simply ideas I would like to work on. There isn't enough time to do everything.

"When I'm doing one thing, I give all my efforts to that and finish it up properly rather than dabble in a lot of areas."

STYLE EASY-GOING

At 63, having been an entertainer for more than 40 years, Ives is perhaps best remembered for such songs as The Big Rock Candy Mountain, Jimmy Crack Corn and Blue-tailed Fly — songs he still can't get off a stage without singing. Audiences won't let him get off.

He has more than 60 albums which still sell well where they're available. They include folk-songs, Christmas and Easter music, religious tunes and songs for children. His easy-going, sometimes-sad style pleases just about anybody.

"I like children's songs," he said. "And I think adults like children's material. Any good children's material — like Alice in Wonderland — sort of can be taken in two or three different layers. The kids get one layer while the grownups and mature people get other layers.

"I think it's true of any good material. It's good for everybody."

His film career included about two dozen features, including a role in The Big Country which won him an Oscar. He also did both the screen and stage versions of Tennessee Williams' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. In The Bold Ones, he portrayed a top-notch attorney and he feels the series, now discontinued, was good for him.

PREFERS RADIO

While TV was enjoyable, he has a nostalgic preference for radio.

". . . In some sense, radio was much more rich in its results. What I mean by that is that the human mind is very fertile and if I sing a song and an audience is listening, and only listening, they conjure up things and their imaginations can soar. If it's television and I'm singing a song, they have to look at me."

Born into "a large family in a small house" in southern Illinois' Jasper County, Ives was named after a friend of his father's; his first name isn't short for anything.

His wife Dorothy travels with him, so he describes wherever he's playing as "home" although his real home is a little village on the old Santa Fe wagon trail in New Mexico.

From there he travels all over the world to give audiences a taste of Burl Ives.

In Toronto

Rudolf Nureyev is in Toronto to rehearse The Sleeping Beauty for the National Ballet of Canada's North American tour which begins in Ottawa Sept. 1.

NEW YORK BRASS & WOODWIND ENSEMBLE

The famous New York Brass and Woodwind Ensemble will give a concert at Place des Arts, tomorrow afternoon, at 4:30 P.M.

This Ensemble is the combination of the American Brass Quintet and the Festival Woodwind Quartet to which one or more artists are often added, depending on programme requirements.

"Virtuoso all," said the Boston Press, "sensitive musicians, flawlessly blended acoustically and emotionally."

From the London Times: "They have everything: technical brilliance, perfect ensemble and intonation, featherlike delicacy".

A Brass and Woodwind Ensemble is returning to Pro Musica for the fourth time. Recent subscribers and the general public will certainly enjoy the unique experience of a concert by the group tomorrow.

Tickets: $5.00 — Students age 7-25, $2.00 (proof of age)

Pro Musica — 1270 Sherbrooke W. — 843-0332 and Place des Arts.

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London Life

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